

# Catahoula

## *National Wildlife Refuge*

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### Refuge Facts

- Established: 1958
- Acres: 6,535 (6,534 acres in LaSalle Parish, 1 acre in Catahoula Parish).
- Location: The refuge is located 1.5 miles west of the Intersection of Highway 28 & 84, on Highway 84, or approximately 12 miles east of Jena, LA.

### Natural History

- Vegetation consists primarily of lowland hardwood forest, subject to annual flooding from Catahoula Lake.
- The Willow Lake Unit contains several hundred acres of old farm fields which provide habitat for grassland species.
- White-tailed deer, small game mammals, songbirds, raptors, and waterbirds. Reptiles and amphibians from alligators to cricket frogs also inhabit the refuge.
- Waterfowl, primarily mallards, are abundant during the winter period, wood ducks reside year-round. Peak waterfowl populations of over 100,000 ducks have been recorded.
- Duck Lake Impoundment and Cowpen Bayou serve as the major waterbodies. Wetlands and open water 1000 acres; bottomland forest 4,435; shrub land 500; old field/grassland 500 acres.

### Financial Impact of Refuge

- Four-person staff.
- 40,000 visitors annually.
- Current base budget (FY 00) \$232,300. Total budget \$305,500.

### Refuge Objectives

- Provide wintering habitat for migratory waterfowl consistent with Mississippi Flyway objectives.

- Provide habitat and protection for endangered species.
- Preserve bottomland hardwoods and provide habitat necessary for wildlife diversity.
- Provide opportunities for environmental education, interpretation and wildlife oriented recreation.

### Management Tools

- Water management for waterfowl.
- Deer and small game management with public hunting.
- Education/interpretation.
- Livestock control fences.
- Chemical control of weeds.
- Law enforcement.

### Public Use Opportunities

- Auto tour route.
- Hiking trails.
- Boardwalk and observation tower.
- Fishing pier for the disabled.
- Wildlife observation.
- Photography.
- Fishing.
- Small game and archery deer hunting.
- Volunteer program.

### Calendar of Events

**March:** Environmental Education Symposium, Green Wing Day, start of fishing season.

**May:** Migratory Bird Day & Count.

**June:** Free fishing days.

**September:** Earth Fair.

**October:** National Wildlife Refuge Week, start of hunting seasons.

**December:** Christmas Bird Count.

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## Questions and Answers

*What is the relationship between Catahoula NWR and Catahoula Lake?*

Catahoula Lake is a state owned wetland which lies adjacent to Catahoula NWR. The refuge manages the water level on Catahoula Lake in accordance with a Tri-party Cooperative Agreement between the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries, and the Army Corps of Engineers.

*What is the water management schedule for Catahoula Lake?*

The lake is dewatered beginning July 1, to encourage the production of moist soil vegetation valuable to waterfowl. A 5,000-acre conservation pool is maintained throughout the summer. Ten to fifteen days prior to the waterfowl hunting season the water level is raised two feet to provide habitat for migratory waterfowl and hunting opportunities. After the waterfowl hunting season, the water level is raised another 4.5 feet to enhance commercial fishing resources.

*When is Catahoula NWR open?*

The refuge is open during daylight hours throughout the year.

*What is the fishing season on the refuge?*

Cowpen Bayou is open to sport fishing throughout the year. Duck Lake Impoundment and all other refuge waters are open from March 1 through October 31.

*What is the refuge hunting season?*

The refuge is open to squirrel hunting (rabbit, raccoon, hog incidental) from the first day of the state squirrel season through October 31 and from the end of the waterfowl hunting season through the end of the state squirrel season. The refuge archery deer season runs from October 1 through January 31.

All hunters are required to obtain a free refuge permit prior to hunting on the refuge.